

Acceptance of a Gay Son

By Fred and Carol Weber

*From the Good Shepherd Church, Menominee Falls, WI newsletter [Published in February 2006
Fortunate Families newsletter]*

We became aware of our youngest son's struggle with his sexual orientation when he was 16. (His awareness started long before this time.) When we discovered some of his writings expressing his feelings that he might be gay, we were shocked. We confronted him and although our emotions ran the gamut of dismay, disbelief, sorrow, guilt, etc., we had that strong of a family relationship to continue a dialogue.

When we sought help we received some of these responses: a priest told us to pray on the matter and our doctor said maybe he would grow out of it. The company human resource help line counselor offered assistance and guidance for us to learn about, understand, and accept homosexuality; one item being the distinction of sexual orientation and activity. "Sexual Orientation is not a choice."

After countless conversations with Michael, on one of his visits home during his second year in college he said he resolved his inner conflict, realized he was gay and could accept that fact. He said he would change for us if he could, but it was not possible. We told him he would always be our son; we loved him deeply and accepted him.



That personal acceptance did not mean we still did not have difficulties with our feelings. We were not yet 'out of the closet' telling friends or openly discussing homosexuality.

We attend a support group called "PFLAG" with him and learned a great deal more. We met a couple who were friends of ours who had divorced about two years before. They divorced because after 15 years of marriage he realized he was living a lie. He pretended to live a straight life for his parents' sake and could not continue. Sexual activity was not an issue here. A couple at another meeting told their story. They were devastated that their 30-something son divorced because he was gay. They loved their daughter-in-law and two grandchildren and could not understand what happened or how they were going to cope with ongoing relationships. We then realized how fortunate we were that our son recognized his orientation, had the courage to confront us and we received the grace to accept.

There are many more details and aspects to the story, but the important moral is this: We all love our children. They are all children of God. We are all alike in that we want to live our lives pursuing happiness, earning a living, experiencing love (being loved and having someone to love), etc.

We have moved from personal acceptance to public acceptance, to advocacy. We believe all people, regardless of sexual orientation should be accepted with dignity and

allowed all civil rights. We also want our children who have been raised Catholic to feel welcome in the church and be able to practice their faith.

We would like to help in a support group or talking individually to people who may be facing such a situation as ours.